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Mandi M. Alexander
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Jonathan Bruce Santo
University of Nebraska at Omaha, jsanto@unomaha.edu

Josafá Da Cunha
Universidade Federal do Parana

Lidia Weber
Universidade Federal do Parana

Stephen T. Russell
University of Arizona

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Effects of Homophobic versus Nonhomophobic Victimization on School Commitment and the Moderating Effect of Teacher Attitudes in Brazilian Public Schools

Mandi M. Alexander and Jonathan B. Santo
Department of Psychology, University of Nebraska at Omaha,
Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Josafá Da Cunha
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação, Universidade Federal do
Paraná, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil

Lidia Weber
Departamentos de Psicologia e de Pós-Graduação e Educação,
Universidade Federal Paraná, Curtiba, Paraná, Brazil

Stephen T. Russell
Family Studies and Human Development, University of Arizona,
Tucson, Arizona, USA

Contributors:

Mandi M. Alexander is a graduate student in the Department of Psychology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, United States.

Jonathan B. Santo teaches in the Department of Psychology, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska, United States.

Josaf´a M. da Cunha and Lidia Weber work at the Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil.

Stephen T. Russell is a Professor at the University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, United States.

Abstract: This study investigated homophobic victimization, teacher support, and school commitment in Brazilian schools. Participants were 339 students, ages 11 to 18 years old, in two public schools in Brazil. Data were obtained using the Brazil Preventing School Harassment Survey. Structural equation modeling revealed that both homophobic and nonhomophobic victimization were negatively related to school commitment but that homophobic victimization was a stronger predictor. Results supported the hypothesis that supportive teachers can moderate the relationship between victimization and school commitment. Finally, the moderating effect of teacher support was stronger in instances of frequent homophobic victimization.

Nobody likes to be picked on. In fact, being bullied or victimized by peers can be harmful emotionally, socially, and academically (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2009). Unfortunately, many children and adolescents do engage in victimizing behaviors toward peers—and they choose a variety of ways to do so. Sexual-minority status, for example, is a common topic of adolescent victimization in many countries. This particular theme is especially troubling in Brazil, where there is still a heavy prejudice against sexual-minority individuals (Abramovay, Castro, & Silva, 2004; Abramovay, Cunha & Calaf, 2009; Ministério da Educação, 2008). This prejudice carries over to the way students victimize their peers.

A literature search on EBSCOhost returns many studies that look at negative outcomes related to being a victim of peer aggression, yet few look at how the types of victimization may affect the victims. The current study uses data from a sample of high school students in Brazil and attempts to address some of the gaps in the literature regarding homophobic victimization and negative academic outcomes. It also explores a possible avenue of intervention: teacher support. Specifically, this study examines the relationship between gender/sexuality-related victimization (referred to as "homophobic victimization"), commitment to educational goals, and whether or not student perceptions of teacher and staff attitudes at school moderate this relationship.

Effects of Peer Victimization

Hawker and Boulton (2000) defined peer victimization as "the experience among children of being a target of the aggressive behavior of other children who are not siblings and not necessarily age-mates" (p. 441). Numerous studies have shown that peer victimization can have negative effects. For example, Ladd, Herald-Brown, and Reiser (2008) showed that grade school children who are rejected by their peers show less growth in classroom participation than do nonrejected children and may even show a decline in participation. Several studies have also found victimization to be positively related to depression, suicidal thoughts, loneliness, anxiety, disrupted concentration, negative social self-concept, and low self-esteem (Boulton, Trueman, & Murray, 2008; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; van der Wal, de Mit, & Hirasing, 2003). Finally, peer victimization has been linked to poor academic performance (see Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2009 for a review).

Sexual-Minority Status and Homophobic Victimization

Though victimization is related to a host of negative outcomes on its own, one would imagine that these outcomes might be magnified if combined with other risk factors such as sexual-minority status. Most sexual-minority individuals become aware of their preferences during adolescence (Savin- Williams & Cohen, 2007), a period that is already defined by transition and turbulence. Experiences at school are

among the main sources of social influence in this process, and yet, as suggested by Louro (1999), schools remain places of ignorance and negativity with respect to nonheterosexual orientations. In addition, these adolescents may face social pressure to conform to a normative sexual profile. At the same time, the discovery of same-sex attraction or nonconforming gender expression can weaken social support by causing conflict and even breaks with family members (Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001) and friends (Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009).

A study by Pearson, Muller and Wilkinson (2007) used the nationally representative surveys Add Health (Adolescent Health) and AHAA (Adolescent Health and Academic Achievement) to answer questions about same-sex attraction and academic outcomes. These researchers found that students with same-sex attractions were more likely to have lower grades and less likely to feel engaged in school, complete higher level courses, or have expectations of continuing education after high school.

Some of these relationships between sexual-minority status and negative outcomes are due to peer victimization. Though little research has looked at sexual-minority status or perceived status as a theme of the victimization itself, researchers have examined general peer victimization among sexual-minority youth. Studies in this area have found that, among sexual-minority students, there is a relationship between victimization and suicidality (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006). Specific to academic outcomes, Murdock and Bolch (2005) surveyed 101 sexual-minority students (mostly junior high school or high school) about peer victimization, exclusion, and teacher support. They found that frequent victimization, high levels of exclusion, and low levels of teacher support were associated with the lowest grade point averages (GPAs).

Though some of the negative outcomes related to sexual minority status may be explained by levels of peer victimization, there seems to be something more to the equation. A study by Birkett and colleagues (2009) compared victimization in sexual-minority students and sexual-majority students and found differences in the ways victimization affects the two groups. Though both heterosexual and sexual-minority students who were victimized show increased depression and more frequent suicidal feelings, sexual-minority students experience a greater increase than heterosexual students.

Regarding homophobic victimization specifically, Birkett and colleagues (2009) found a relationship between homophobic teasing and truancy. Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, and Koenig (2008) found that among Midwestern high school students, both sexual-minority and non-sexual-minority students experience homophobic teasing. However, sexual-minority students experience higher levels of homophobic teasing and are affected more strongly by it, experiencing higher rates of depression, suicidal tendencies, and substance abuse.

Other studies with high school–aged youth have found similar results pertaining to victimization of sexual-minority students and negative outcomes. Poteat and Espelage (2007) measured the frequency of victimization within the last 30 days and found that outcomes such as substance abuse and suicidal thoughts were more highly correlated with victimization for sexual-minority students than for heterosexual students. Russell and Joyner (2001) used data from the ADD health study and found that sexual-minority youth are more likely to attempt suicide even when age and family structure are controlled for. They further found that the risk for suicide attempts was only partly explained by the *level* of victimization. These studies seem to indicate that though the level of victimization is related to negative outcomes, perhaps content of victimization could also play a role.

Potential Moderators

Because of the serious negative effects associated with sexual-minority status and victimization, it is critical to find ways to improve the situation for targets of homophobic victimization. Several studies

have looked at which factors might moderate negative effects related to sexual-minority status. For instance, researchers have examined the role of parents in the relationship between sexual-minority status and negative outcomes. They have found that parents have a very limited effect, moderating between victimization and substance abuse but doing little or nothing to moderate depression, suicidality, delinquency, or grade point average (Espelage et al., 2008; Murdock & Bolch, 2005).

Other studies have shown that friendships can buffer some of the negative effects of victimization (Boulton, Trueman, Chau, Whitehand, & Amatya, 1999; Malcolm, Jensen-Campbell, Rex-Lear, & Waldrip, 2006) as well as negative affect related to sexual-minority status (Diamond & Lucas, 2004). Unfortunately, it may be harder for sexual-minority students to find and maintain friendships (Diamond & Lucas, 2004; Poteat et al., 2009; Ueno, 2005).

Finally, a few studies have explored the possible moderating effects that teachers and school staff can have on negative academic outcomes. Murdock and Bolch (2005) examined teacher support as part of the school environment and found that teachers can provide a buffer between homophobic environments and a student's sense of belonging. For boys, in particular, relationships with teachers seem to be especially relevant to school outcomes (Pearson et al., 2007). Though they did not focus on sexual-minority students, Decker, Dona, and Christenson (2007) found evidence that adult support can have a positive effect on academic outcomes in other minority students. These studies suggest that perhaps teachers can exert a relevant moderating effect on the negative outcomes of sexual-minority status in school.

Gaps in the Literature

Though some issues, such as the effect of intensity of victimization on academic outcomes, have been well researched, there are gaps in the literature. For instance, few studies explore how the content or subject of victimization may affect students. It is possible that the subject of victimization affects how harassment is received and how it impacts the victim. Espelage et al. (2008) explored homophobic teasing specifically. However, that study examined depression, suicidality, and substance abuse as outcomes; it did not look at academic outcomes.

In addition, there is room for more investigation into the ways teachers may affect the academic outcomes for targets of peer victimization. Many studies include teacher variables as part of school environment but do not look at how teachers may stand out from the general environment to moderate the relationship between victimization and academic outcomes.

Finally, all of the studies previously described were conducted with students in the United States. These effects need to be studied in populations outside of North America to ensure that all students can benefit equally from research. One of the first comprehensive studies that examined the incidence of homophobic discrimination in Brazilian schools was conducted in 2001, including data of 16,422 elementary and high school students from 16 Brazilian state capitals (Abramovay et al., 2004). Results showed that approximately one-fourth of the participants (27.0%) would not like to have homosexual classmates, a value that was higher among boys (39.4%) than girls (16.5%). The work of Abramovay and colleagues (2009) includes data from 9,937 students in 2008 in the Distrito Federal (Federal District) in Brazil. In this sample, 63.1% of students reported that they had observed episodes of homophobic harassment, and 27.8% of participants did not want to have homosexual classmates, with a higher proportion of boys (44.4%) in comparison to girls (14.9%) who did not want to share their classrooms with homosexuals. Finally, a representative sample based on the Brazilian School Census of 2007, including 15,087 elementary and high school students (*Ministério da Educação*, 2008) indicated that a high percentage of these students witnessed or heard about episodes in which classmates that were or looked like homosexuals were humiliated (35.6%) or physically assaulted (18.7%) in the school environment. These

studies indicate that homophobic behaviors and attitudes are a critical issue for schools in Brazil, which could be failing students by not dealing with the issue or, even worse, by promoting homophobia (Louro, 2004).

Current Study

The current study begins to address gaps in our knowledge base by examining data from a sample of middle school and high school–aged students in Brazil. Several items asked students about their perceptions of school staff, school environment (safety, presence of a sexual-minority support group or club, etc.), peer victimization, and academic outcomes, specifically school commitment. These data were used to analyze the relationships between homophobic and nonhomophobic victimization and school commitment while investigating how students' perceptions of teachers and school staff might affect their school commitment and experiences of victimization. Furthermore, this study examined these relationships in Brazil, a country that exhibits high levels of homophobia but is understudied with respect to homophobic victimization in schools.

Based on the literature, we hypothesized that students who were victimized would have lower commitment to school and long-term educational goals. We further hypothesized that teachers and other school staff would have a moderating effect on this relationship such that supportive staff would increase commitment while unsupportive staff would lower commitment.
To further explore this relationship as it applies to homophobic victimization, we predicted that the effects of victimization on school outcomes and the moderating effects of adult support would be more pronounced for targets of homophobic victimization than for those who were targets of other forms of victimization, such as body size or economic status. Figure 1 shows a representation of the predicted relationships between victimization, teacher variables, and commitment.

Method

Participants

This study used data from the Brazil Preventing School Harassment Survey which sampled 684 students, ages 11 through 18 years old, in the state of Paraná, Brazil. Though data were collected online as well as in public schools, only data from the paper surveys distributed in the schools were used for the current analyses. This article included data from a total of 339 students between the ages of 11 and 18 years (M = 13.2 years). Approximately 52.9% of participants were boys.

Procedures

The Brazil Preventing School Harassment Survey was translated from the 2003 Preventing School Harassment Survey used by the California Safe Schools Coalition. Items from the Preventing School Harassment Survey were translated from English into Portuguese and then reviewed for accuracy. Additional items were added to measure the frequency of peer victimization.

The survey was first conducted at two urban public schools in Brazil and was also made available online. In the case of the public school surveys, permission was requested from school principals where the surveys were to be distributed, a description and explanation of the project were given to participants, and informed consent was obtained. The online survey was not used in this study because it was specifically advertised in online communities with a focus on peer victimization or harassment, and we felt that it

would not represent the general school population in the same way as would the data acquired from the paper surveys.

Measures

SCHOOL COMMITMENT

Three items asked participants about their academic plans, including whether they planned to graduate from high school or continue with school after graduating. Answers ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) for each item. All three items were averaged into one score and used as a measure of school commitment (Cronbach's α = .766).

PERCEPTION OF TEACHER SUPPORT

To measure students' perceptions of positive teacher interactions, we chose several items about students' perceptions of the teachers and staff at their school. Five items seemed to indicate whether the students felt there was at least one adult at school who cared about them and their successes. The items were scored on a four-point scale with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 4 indicting strong agreement. Scores for the following five questions were averaged to create a measure of school caring: "At my school there is a teacher or some other adult who (1) really cares about me, (2) tells me when I do a good job, (3) notices when I'm not there, (4) listens to me when I have something to say, (5) believes that I will be a success" (Cronbach's α = .791). In Portuguese, this was written "Na minha escola, existe um professor ou outro adulto, (1) que realmente se importa comigo, (2) que me elogia quando eu faço um bom trabalho, (3) que percebe quando eu não estou, (4) que me ouve quando eu tenho algo a dizer, (5) que acredita em meu sucesso."

PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS' DISCRIMINATION:

Seven items on the survey asked how often participants overheard teachers making negative comments about different topics. We included four of these items that asked about race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and gender expression or identity (Cronbach's α = .852). An example item is, "How often do you hear teachers or other school staff make negative comments or use slurs based on ethnicity, race, or color?"/"Com qual freqüência você ouve professores ou outros funcionários fazerem comentários negativos ou Provocações baseados em Etnia, raça, ou cor?" Answers were given on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

HOMOPHOBIC VICTIMIZATION

Victimization was defined as any instance where a student experienced physical aggression, name-calling, exclusion, threats, or provocation. Participants were given the following prompt: "During the past 12 months, how many times on school property were you harassed or bullied for any of the following reasons?"/"Durante os últimos 12 meses, quantas vezes na escolar você foi assediado ou agredido por algum dos motivos a seguir?" A list of possible reasons followed immediately after the prompt, and students were asked to indicate how often they had been victimized for each reason. The scale ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (six or more times in the last year) for each reason. The homophobic victimization variable was created by averaging the frequencies for two of the reasons given: "Gender"/" Gênero" and "Sexual orientation"/" Orientação sexual (ser ou parecer LGBT)" (Cronbach's α = .740).

NONHOMOPHOBIC VICTIMIZATION

Items for nonhomophobic victimization were prompted with the same question as the homophobic victimization items. To measure general victimization, responses to three of the more frequently cited reasons for victimization ("Ethnicity, race, or color"/"Etnia, raça, ou cor," 12.5%; "Age"/"Idade," 16.3%; and "Body size"/"Tamanho do corpo," 30.7%) were averaged to create a single score (Cronbach's $\alpha =$ .591).

GENERAL PEER VICTIMIZATION

The Peer Aggression and Victimization Scale (PAVS) (Cunha, Weber, & Steiner, 2009) was used to determine overall levels of peer victimization. This scale asked participants to indicate how often they had experienced different forms of peer victimization such as name-calling, exclusion, insults, and jokes at their expense. For example, students responded to the following statement: "Peers have excluded me from groups or games"/"Colegas me excluíram de grupos ou brincadeiras." Frequency of each form of victimization was indicated on a scale of one (never) to five (always). Individual scores for these seven items were averaged to create an overall measure of victimization frequency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$). This measure was used to control for overall levels of victimization and forms of victimization that we may not have specifically asked about. Table 1 shows the number of items and Cronbach's alphas for each measure.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations can be seen in Table 1. Simple correlations between variables revealed that teacher support was positively related to school commitment ($r = .33$, $p < .05$) and negatively correlated to negative teacher attitudes ($r = -.32$, $p < .05$). Negative teacher attitudes were positively related to frequency of victimization for all of our victimization measures (correlations ranged from .19 to .24, $p < .05$). As expected, overall frequency of victimization was positively related to both homophobic victimization and other victimization ($r = .17$ and .34 for homophobic and other respectively, $p < .05$). The two victimization motives (homophobic and nonhomophobic) were also positively correlated ($r = .49$, $p < .05$). Finally, homophobic victimization was negatively related to school commitment ($r = -.17$, $p < .05$), but there was no significant relationship between our other measures of victimization and school commitment.

Three models were tested using structural equation modeling (M-Plus, Muthén & Muthén, 2006). The first model tested the relationships between victimization and school commitment (shown in Figure 2); the second model tested the relationships between victimization, teacher attitudes, and school commitment (shown in Figure 3); and the third model tested the interactions between victimization and teacher attitudes (shown in Figure 4). After our initial analysis, there was some indication that our model was a better fit for boys than for girls. However, we did not have enough participants to split the sample and analyze the model for boys and girls separately. For this reason we combined boys and girls into one sample for the analyses that follow.

The first model tested the hypothesis that victimization has a negative effect on school commitment. To compare effects of general victimization to effects of homophobic victimization we included these two variables as our predictors of school commitment. We also included a measure of overall victimization frequency as a control. This initial analysis showed that homophobic victimization, but not

nonhomophobic victimization, was significantly negatively related to school commitment ($\beta = -.174$ $p < .05$, $R_2 = 3.2\%$).

After verifying the relationship between victimization and school commitment a second model was tested. This model added teacher attitudes to the first model. Hence, this second model regressed school commitment on frequency of victimization, nonhomophobic victimization, homophobic victimization, negative teacher attitudes, and positive teacher attitudes. This model fit the data well ($\chi2_{(2)} = 1.00$, $p > .05$, $CFI = 1.00$, $RMSEA = .00$, and $SRMR = .01$). In this model we found that both topics of victimization continued to be significantly negatively related to school commitment. In addition, positive teacher attitude was significantly positively related to school commitment. Unexpectedly, though negative teacher attitudes were correlated with all of the victimization variables, it was not a significant predictor of school commitment. Overall, this model accounted for about 14% of the variance in school commitment ($p < .05$).

For the final model (shown in Figure 4) we created a homophobic victimization by positive teacher interaction variable and a homophobic victimization by negative teacher interaction. These two interaction terms were then added to Model 2 so that we were regressing school commitment on frequency of victimization, nonhomophobic victimization, homophobic victimization, negative teacher attitudes, positive teacher attitudes, homophobic victimization by positive teacher, and homophobic victimization by negative teacher. The final model remained a good fit to the data ($\chi2_{(8)} = 9.15$, $p > .05$, $CFI = .997$, $RMSEA = .02$, and $SRMR = .02$). As reported in Table 2, we found a significant interaction between homophobic victimization and positive teacher attitudes ($p < .05$).

To clarify the nature of the positive teacher by homophobic victimization interaction we graphed the two slopes for low teacher support versus high teacher support. As shown in Figure 5, students who experienced high levels of homophobic victimization benefited more from supportive teachers than did students who experienced low levels of homophobic victimization.

We did not find a similar interaction for our nonhomophobic victimization measure, indicating that the effect of teacher attitude on school commitment is not statistically significantly different for students who experience nonhomophobic victimization. Results from all three models are shown in Table 2.

Discussion

Results provide support for our hypotheses and indicate additional relationships regarding homophobic victimization, teacher attitudes, and school commitment. Victimization for perceived sexual-minority status and victimization for other reasons were significantly correlated, indicating that students who were victimized for sexual preferences or gender expression were likely to have experienced victimization for other reasons as well. We also found that supportive teachers and negative teacher attitudes were negatively correlated. This probably means that in schools where teachers are open about their discriminatory attitudes it is harder for students to find a teacher or staff member who is supportive of them. Perhaps this is because the openly prejudiced environment intimidates teachers who might otherwise be supportive of sexual-minority students. Alternatively, positive teachers may simply avoid working at schools with negative environments, while negative teachers find it harder to get hired at friendlier schools.

Our first model showed that homophobic victimization is a significant predictor of students' commitment to school and indicated that the more victimization a student experiences, the less commitment that student will have toward school. Though the effect sizes for victimization were relatively small, Nakamoto and Schwartz (2009) have shown that using self-reported grades tends to result in smaller

effect sizes. If actual school commitment were used instead of planned commitment these effect sizes may have been larger. In addition, we found support for our hypothesis that victimization for sexual-minority status is a stronger predictor of school commitment than victimization for other reasons. In fact, homophobic victimization had a consistently higher effect on school commitment in all three models.

The second model supported the hypothesis that teacher attitudes have an effect on school outcomes, specifically school commitment. When students who experienced victimization were able to find a teacher who they perceived as caring, they were more likely to make plans to finish school and continue their education after high school. While our results indicated that teachers can have a positive effect on school commitment for all students, this positive effect is stronger for students who experience high amounts of homophobic victimization than for students who do not experience homophobic victimization.

This supports the notion that positive teacher attitudes may be especially helpful for sexual-minority students. It may be that students who experience high levels of homophobic victimization find teacher support particularly helpful because they tend to have fewer support resources than do other students (Poteat et al., 2009; Russell et al., 2001). These students may transfer their energies and commitments to pleasing a caring teacher rather than trying to relate to peers who are hostile toward them. The fact that we did not find an interaction for general victimization may indicate that students who are victimized for other reasons perhaps turn to other resources such as friendships for support. The differences between support systems needs to be tested further and future research should explore this subject to identify the mechanisms involved in this relationship.

Surprisingly, our data indicate that negative teacher attitudes do not have a significant effect on school commitment. This may be because our measure asked students if they had overheard teachers expressing negative attitudes when, in reality, it is more likely that students experience teachers' negative attitudes in more subtle ways. Alternatively, it could be that students with low commitment are not going to be further affected by negative teacher attitudes, while students with higher commitment levels are committed for reasons other than their teachers and so do not pay much attention to teacher attitudes. Positive teacher attitudes may be effective in that they can bring low commitment up for those who have few role models who genuinely seem to care.

Though we did not find significant relationships between negative teacher attitudes and school commitment, we did find significant positive relationships between negative teacher attitudes and all measures of victimization. This could indicate that negative teachers have more of an effect on school environment than on individual students. It may also be that youth who witness authority figures being negative and judgmental are more likely to feel that those behaviors are acceptable and so are more likely to be negative and judgmental themselves. Teachers who have negative attitudes toward certain groups of students might also be less likely to intervene when those students are victimized. Alternatively, it could simply be an indication that adults and children in the same communities tend to share certain attitudes.

Limitations and Future Research

Though we found support for our hypothesis, there were limitations to our study and questions that we could not address.

We did not control for socioeconomic status (SES) in this study because our measure of SES did not correlate with our other measures. Because SES has been shown to affect many elements of youth development (Conger & Ge, 1994; Hackman & Farah, 2009; Nuru-Jeter, Sarsour, Jutte, & Boyce, 2010) it is important to find a measure of SES that will serve to control for this variable in future studies of sexual-minority outcomes.

Sex differences in sexual-minority status and school outcomes are another important factor to consider. Our initial analysis of differences between boys and girls indicated that our model was a better fit for boys than for girls and that girls may in fact experience victimization, teacher support, and school commitment differently than boys. Pearson and colleagues (2007) similarly discovered that the relationship between same-sex attractions and academic outcomes, though still significant for boys, was no longer significant for girls after they controlled for various background variables such as ethnicity and family structure. We felt that these gender differences warranted a separate study and so we did not explore this relationship further in the current study.

This study examined a specific theme of victimization that should be studied more thoroughly. Because we did not have a large enough sample we could not compare the effects between students for whom the victimization was based on truth and students for whom the victimization was simply a convenient way to make them feel bad. It is possible that adolescents will be affected differently if they believe the topic of harassment to be relevant and specific to them. Furthermore, if students are not open about their sexual preferences, being harassed for their sexuality may cause additional anxiety about being "outed" or exposed to their peers. Future studies should look at predictors and outcomes for students who are out to their peers versus those who are not.

A similar question that we did not address was how different forms of victimization may affect students who are questioning their sexuality or gender identity. A study by Espelage and colleagues (2008) indicates that questioning students often experience even more extreme outcomes than do students who have established their identity as a sexual minority. They found this to be especially true for homophobic victimization and parental support, in other words, students who were questioning their sexual preferences experienced more homophobic victimization and felt less support from their parents. Clearly the findings within this group warrant further research.

Conclusion

The results of this study supported all of our hypotheses and the study, as a whole, makes progress toward several important goals: investigating themes of victimization, finding more specific causes of negative outcomes for sexual-minority youth, and finding possible ways to decrease those negative outcomes. This study contributes to evidence that victimization is related to negative academic outcomes while also showing that this relationship can be different depending on the topic of the victimization. Specifically, this study provides evidence indicating that negative outcomes are more pronounced when victimization is related to sexual preferences or gender expression. This highlights one of the many possible differences that may exist for sexual minority youth attending schools in homophobic environments. Furthermore, this study sheds light on a population in which sexual-minority issues are understudied.

Equally important, this study explored a possible avenue of countering negative academic outcomes and increasing students' commitment to education. The findings of this study support the idea that teachers can have an ameliorative effect on school commitment for at-risk students. This ameliorative effect is stronger for youth who are victimized for sexuality-related reasons, a group that is at higher risk for negative outcomes. This is important because, though it may be hard to affect other vectors of support such as family or friendships, teachers can be selected based on their supportive attitudes and behaviors. In Brazil, and other areas that continue to have high rates of homophobic attitudes, finding supportive teachers and school staff may be a relatively simple but effective route to improving outcomes for minority students.

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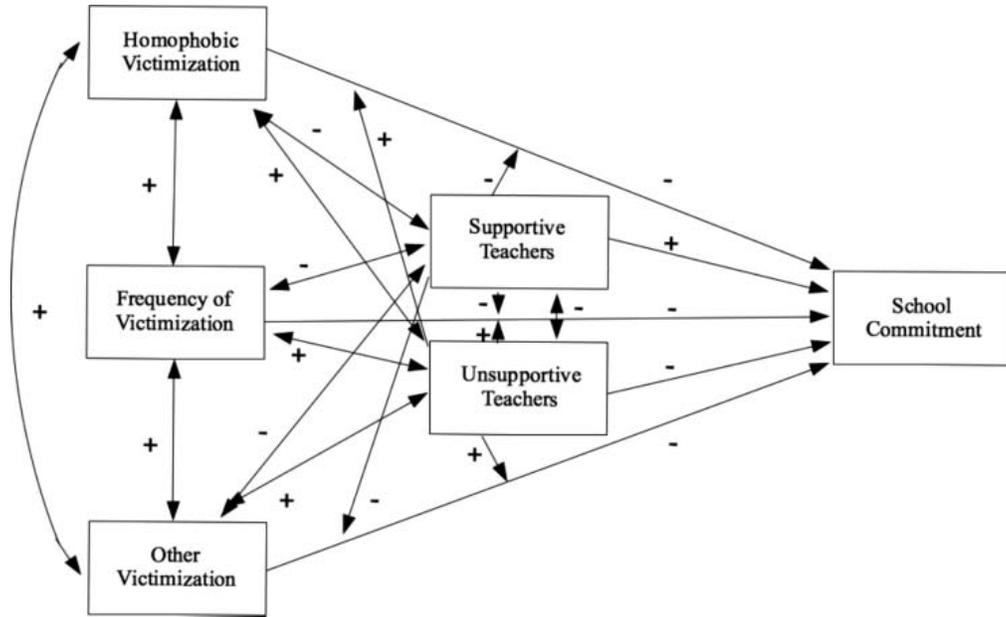
FIGURE 1 Predicted Model.

TABLE 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Consistency, and Correlations

	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Commitment	3.451	0.587	.77	.326**	−0.07	.037	−.168**	−.069	−.022	−.005
2. Teacher Support	2.875	0.652		.79	−.321**	.007	−.031	−.041	.010	−.049
3. Unsupportive Teachers	1.576	0.770			.85	.186**	.231**	.238**	.058	−0.12
4. Victimization Frequency	2.176	0.877				.84	.165**	.336**	.036	−.099
5. Homophobic Victimization	1.138	0.568					.74	.490**	−.003	−.125*
6. Other Victimization	1.397	0.695						.59	.017	−.112
7. SES	1.678	0.411							.51	−.011
8. Gender	1.472	0.500								—

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

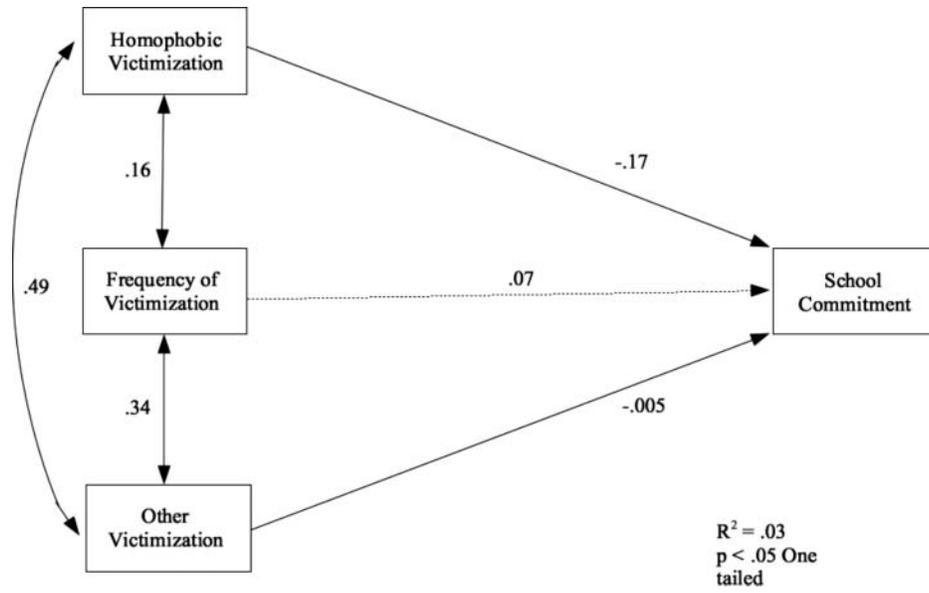For gender: boys were coded as 1 and girls were coded as 2. Cronbach's alphas are displayed on the diagonal.
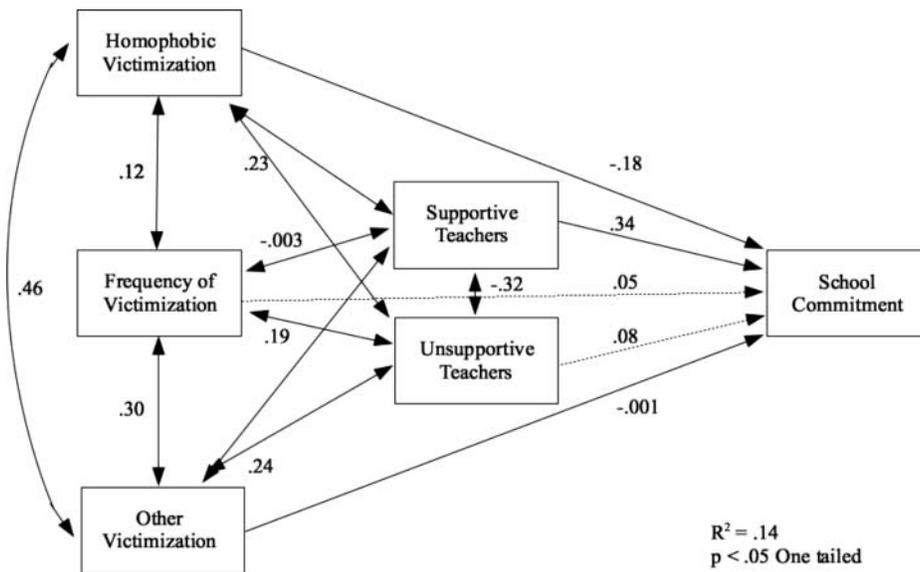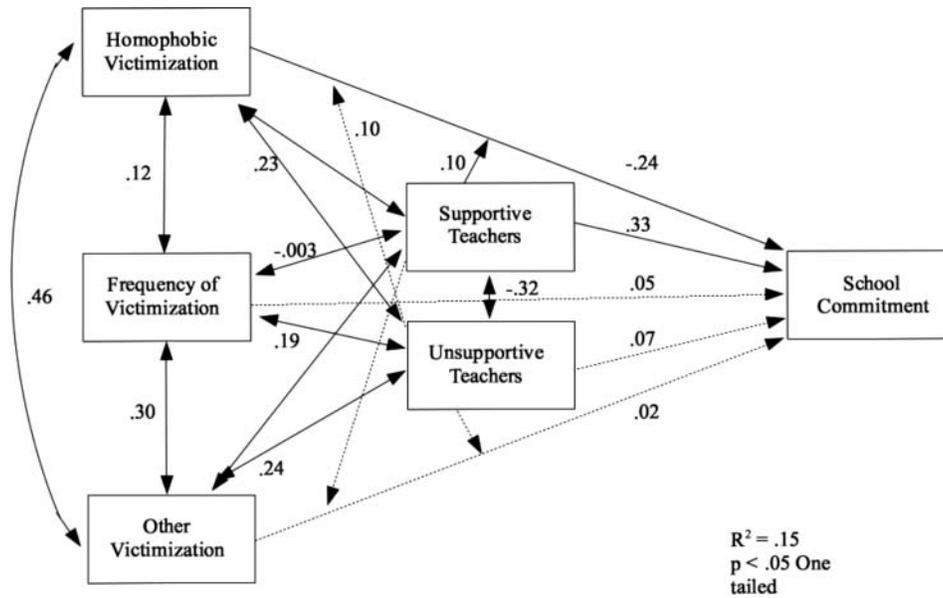
FIGURE 2 Model 1.
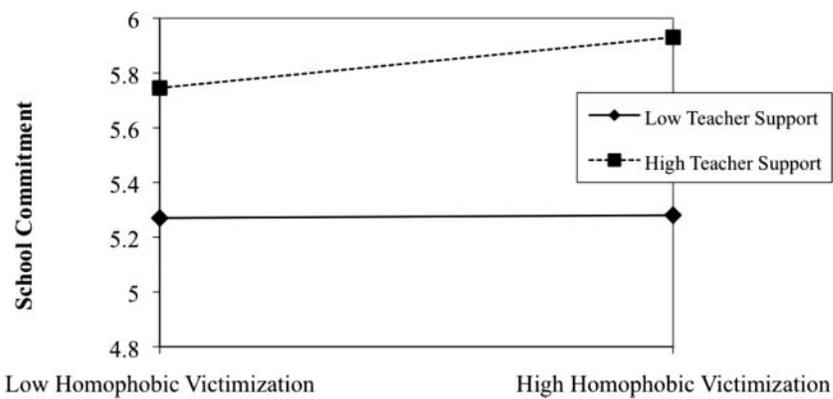

FIGURE 3 Model 2.

FIGURE 4 Model 3.

FIGURE 5 Interaction Between Teacher Support and Homophobic Victimization.

TABLE 2 Coefficients, Statistics, and Fit Indices for Model 1, Model 2, and Model 3

Variable	b	β	SE	Est/SE	p	R^2	χ^2	p	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1						0.032	0.000	0.000	1.00	0.000
Intercept	6.073		0.019	1.682	0.093					
Victimization Frequency	0.046	0.068	0.057	1.192	0.233					
Homophobic Victimization	−0.180	−0.174	0.061	−2.854	0.004					
Other Victimization	−0.004	−0.005	0.065	−0.076	0.940					
Model 2						0.143	1.004	0.605	1.00	0.000
Intercept	4.438		0.036	4.026	0.000					
Victimization Frequency	0.035	0.051	0.054	0.945	0.345					
Homophobic Victimization	−0.187	−0.181	0.058	−3.125	0.002					
Other Victimization	−0.001	−0.001	0.061	−0.023	0.981					
Teacher Support	0.310	0.343	0.051	6.783	0.175					
Unsupportive Teachers	0.058	0.076	0.056	1.358	0.000					
Model 3						0.154	9.150	0.330	0.997	0.021
Intercept	4.605		0.036	4.241	0.000					
Victimization Frequency	0.033	0.049	0.054	0.906	0.365					
Homophobic Victimization	−0.253	−0.244	0.077	−3.170	0.002					
Other Victimization	0.014	0.016	0.061	0.264	0.792					
Teacher Support	0.297	0.328	0.051	6.429	0.232					
Unsupportive Teachers	0.051	0.067	0.056	1.195	0.000					
Homophobic by Support	0.118	0.104	0.054	1.937	0.053					
Homophobic by Unsupportive	0.090	0.102	0.074	1.381	0.167					

[*] $p < .05$; [**] $p < .01$ Two-tailed.
Note: N = 338.